Listing of the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of the claims:

1. (original) A system for auditing an electronically based auction, which is located on an auction site, comprising:

      (a) an auction management module, located on the auction site, wherein the auction management module manages the auction for a seller; and

      (b) an auction auditing module, in communication with the auction management module, to audit the auction taking place on the auction site.

2. (original) A system as in claim 1, wherein the auction auditing module audits the auction to verify that the auction functions in a manner consistent with represented procedures of the auction site.

3. (original) A system as in claim 1, further comprising a data verification component to verify that data submitted to the auction is represented accurately in the auction.

4. (original) A system as in claim 1, further comprising a data verification component to verify that a correct winning bidder was selected.

5. (original) A system as in claim 4, further comprising simulated bidder data, wherein the simulated bidder data is removed in the background from the auction management module in the event that the simulated bidder data wins the auction and a next best bidder is selected and reported to a seller.

6. (original) A system as in claim 1, further comprising a plurality of actual bidder inputs, which enable submission of bids to the auction through the auction management module.

7. (original) A system as in claim 1, further comprising an audit server to host the auction auditing module, wherein the auction auditing module is in networked communication

with the auction management module.

8. (original) A system as in claim 1, further comprising an auction server that hosts the auction management module.

9. (original) A system as in claim 8, wherein the auction auditing module is hosted on an auction server with the auction management module.

10. (original) A system for auditing an electronically based auction, which is located on an auction site, comprising:

      (a) an auction management module, located on the auction site, wherein the auction management module hosts the auction for a seller;

      (b) a plurality of actual bidder inputs, associated with the auction management module, to allow actual bidders to place bids in the auction on the auction site;

      (c) an auction auditing module, in communication with the auction management module, to audit an auction taking place on the auction site; and

      (d) simulated bidder data, controlled by the auction auditing module, to submit at least one bid to the auction.

11. (original) A system as in claim 10, further comprising a data verification component to verify that data submitted to the auction with the simulated bidder data is represented accurately and that a correct winning bidder is selected.

12. (original) A system as in claim 10 further comprising a shill detection module located in the auction audit module that detects the possibility that a seller is using a shill who is making bids in the auction.

13. (original) A system as in 10, wherein the simulated bidder data includes at least one bid to verify that bids are represented accurately in the auction management module.

14. (original) A method for auditing an electronically based auction, which is located on

an auction site that manages an auction for a seller through an auction management module, comprising the steps of:

(a) allowing a plurality of actual bidders to place bids in the auction;

(b) generating a simulated bidder through an auction auditing module;

(c) receiving a bid from the simulated bidder in the auction; and

(d) auditing the auction's behavior based on the bid placed by the simulated bidder.

15. (original) A method as in claim 14, wherein the step of auditing the auction's behavior further comprises the step of determining if the auction is fair by verifying that the simulated bidder's bid is represented accurately by the auction management module.

16. (original) A method as in claim 14, wherein the step of auditing the auction's behavior further comprises the step of validating that a best bid was programmatically selected by the auction management module as a winner of the auction.

17. (original) A method as in claim 14, wherein the step of auditing the auction behavior further comprises the step of verifying the accuracy of all competing bids to determine whether or not a correct auction winner was selected.

18. (withdrawn) A method for auditing an electronically based auction, which is located on an auction site that manages an auction for a seller through an auction management module, wherein the audit is performed when the auction is active, comprising the steps of:

(a) interrupting online operations of the auction and auction management module;

(b) inhibiting any modifications to the auction and auction management module;

(c) executing a simulated auction using simulated bidders and a simulated seller;

(d) auditing the auction and auction management module based on the simulated auction;

(e) returning the auction and auction management module to online operations.

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19. (withdrawn) A method as in claim 18, wherein the step of auditing the auction and auction management module further comprises the step of verifying that a correct auction winner was selected based on simulated bids made by the simulated bidders.

20. (withdrawn) A method as in claim 18, wherein the step of auditing the auction and auction management module further comprises the step of verifying output from the auction management module based on simulated bids made by the simulated bidders.

21. (withdrawn) A method as in claim 18, wherein the step of auditing the auction and auction management module further comprises the step of verifying displayed description output from the auction management module for an auction item submitted by the simulated seller.